



# PARENT MANUAL

## ALL PARTICIPANTS

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2020



## PARENT INFORMATION MANUAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information & About Us	3
Program Overview	4
Saddle Up! Rules	6
Program Eligibility/Discharge	7
Registration Information	7
Visitors	8
Medical & Non-Medical Leave	8
Inclement Weather & Temperature	9
Casting Information	10
Parent & Staff Communications	11
Helmet Information	11
Confidentiality Policy	13
Behavior Policy	14
Photos/Videos & Social Media Guidelines	15
Ways to Say "Thank You"	15
Emergency Information	16
Disaster Plans	17
Volunteers	19
How You Can Help	19
Terminology	20
Frequently Asked Questions	21

## GENERAL INFORMATION & ABOUT US

### OUR MISSION

The mission of Saddle Up! is to provide children and youth with disabilities the opportunity to grow and develop through therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities with horses.

**ADDRESS:** 1549 Old Hillsboro Rd.  
Franklin, TN 37069

**PHONE:** (615) 794-1150

### LESSON HOTLINE: extension 290

\*The Lesson Hotline (x290) is reserved for messages regarding tardiness or absences. If your child is going to be absent, please email us at [attendance@saddleupnashville.org](mailto:attendance@saddleupnashville.org). If the absence is less than 2 hours' notice from the program time you MUST also CALL the lesson hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 and leave a message. If you are running late and your child will be tardy, please call the office at (615) 794-1150 and talk with a staff person or leave a message on the lesson hotline at extension 290.

**FAX:** (615) 794-7973

**WEBSITE:** [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org)

### ABOUT OUR STAFF

- All Saddle Up! Instructors are required to hold a PATH International Professional Certification in their program field.
- All Saddle Up! Therapists are required to attend trainings through the American Hippotherapy Association.

### ABOUT OUR HORSES

- They are all required to go through a trial period in order for us to access their appropriateness for our program.
- Before entering the program, they must pass their Instructor/Therapist evaluations with more than an 80% pass rate.
- Each horse has a nutrition, conditioning, and training plan in order to maintain optimal health.

### ABOUT PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP (PATH) INTERNATIONAL:

- PATH International is the credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists.
- Saddle Up! is a PATH International Premier Accredited Center.
- Saddle Up! follows the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications for determining eligibility for our programs.
- Professional certifications through PATH International provide staff with disability education and horsemanship training specific to the program.

### PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR...

- History of the organization
- Program schedule
- Upcoming events
- Current list of staff
- Current list of Board of Directors
- Current list of horses and their biographies



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### OUR PROGRAMS

Saddle Up! is a PATH International Premier Accredited Center which provides high quality services in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies. Based on your child's needs and interests we can provide quality services through Adaptive Riding, Therapy Services, Equine Assisted Learning, Fun on the Farm, Saddle Up! Equestrian Club, Interactive Vaulting, and/or Alumni Transitions. To find out more information about our services and how to get your child involved, please review the information below. More details about each program is available on our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org).

### WHY THE HORSE?

Nothing can compare to the power of the horse. The auto industry has put "horsepower" into their engines for decades, but there is a "horse power" beyond strength and speed that only a real horse can provide. We partner with our herd to offer children and youth with disabilities a unique environment to grow and develop. Our horses provide movement, support, learning opportunities, strength, stability, companionship, and much more to participants in all of our different programs. To see the horses in action and the amazing power they have to offer, feel free to schedule a visit for you and your family.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Saddle Up! serves children and youth with disabilities between the ages of 2 and 24 years old. Additional eligibility requirements differ depending on the program, please visit our website for more information. Saddle Up! follows the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications for participant eligibility in all of our programs.

### ADAPTIVE RIDING

Saddle Up!'s Adaptive Riding (AR) program is an equine-assisted activity in which participants work on their mounted and unmounted horsemanship skills. Our PATH International Certified Instructors adapt the lesson for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of children with disabilities. Secondary benefits that have been observed by Saddle Up! families include improvements in balance, endurance, coordination, communication, speech, attention, and much more. Our Adaptive Riding program serves children with disabilities from the age of 4 through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### THERAPY SERVICES

Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services (TS) offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language therapy that incorporates equine movement as a treatment strategy. Our therapists skillfully direct the movement of the horse to challenge and engage the client's neuromuscular and sensorimotor systems to address the client's challenges, such as deficits in balance, endurance, coordination, communication, speech, and attention. Therapy Services treats client's with disabilities as young as 2 years old.

### EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

Saddle Up!'s Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) program is an experiential learning approach which involves students interacting with horses to build self-confidence, improve social skills, and reinforce academic skills. Using the barn as a dynamic classroom, students also get to participate in arts, crafts, games, and discovery. This program is designed for students Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade with learning and/or social differences.

### EQUESTRIAN CLUB

The Saddle Up! Equestrian Club (SUEC) is comprised of riders who have excelled through the Adaptive Riding program and are working on mastering their horsemanship skills. Each SUEC meeting gives riders the opportunity to participate in class work, barn work, riding, and horse care. Riders are children with disabilities who have achieved Level #4 in RIDES®, through our [Adaptive Riding](#) program, and show continued interest in excelling their horsemanship skills.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW CONT.

### **INTERACTIVE VAULTING**

Saddle Up!'s Interactive Vaulting (IV) program is an equine-assisted activity in which participants perform movements on and around the horse while the horse is being lunged on a circle. During a lesson, our PATH International Certified Vaulting Instructor directs vaulters to interact with each other and their horse in many different ways in order to foster teamwork and independence, teach respect for the horse, build confidence, and encourage social interaction. Our Interactive Vaulting program serves children and youth with disabilities from the age of 6 through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **ALUMNI TRANSITIONS**

Saddle Up!'s Alumni Transitions (AT) program is for Saddle Up! Graduates. They will continue their Adaptive Riding education and combine it with vocational and life skills to enhance their quality of life and community impact. During a lesson, our PATH International Certified Instructor will lead graduates in a 1.5 hour lesson that includes learning activities, riding, and vocational skills. Our Alumni Transitions program serves youth with disabilities from the age of 19 through their 24<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **FUN ON THE FARM (SUMMER ONLY)**

Fun on the Farm is a summer only, equine assisted learning program in which participants get to come out to Saddle Up! for a week and discover the farm from our herd's point of view. Activities such as nature hikes, horse handling, crafts, water play, and riding lessons will teach students leadership, teamwork, and problem solving skills... and they'll have so much fun they won't even know they are learning! Our Fun on the Farm program is designed for children and youth with disabilities from the age of 6 through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

For more information about our programs, please visit our website or contact our Program Administrator.

## SADDLE UP! RULES

Saddle Up! asks that all of its participants, parents, volunteers and staff understand and adhere to the following rules.

1. This is a program that celebrates diversity and sees value in all the participants. Respect and cordiality towards all participants is expected.
2. Respect Saddle Up! facilities, materials, animals, and all participants' confidentiality.
3. No smoking in the Saddle Up! program area, buildings or barn areas.
4. No alcoholic beverages on the premises except for Executive Board approved functions.
5. Participants are required to have their helmets on and properly fitted before leaving the family area and entering the arena area.
6. All participants, staff, and volunteers are required to wear closed-toe shoes, preferably boots or tennis shoes, when past the lobby and office area.
7. Visitor and special guests without appropriate footwear will be allowed on staff guided tours, but for their own safety will not be allowed to interact with horses.
8. Parents/guardians need to inform child's instructor/therapist any time your child has any medication changes or changes in physical or emotional status.
9. Do not climb or allow your children to climb on any fences or enter pastures.
10. Do not feed or pet Saddle Up! horses through the fences and gates.
11. Parents/guardians are to remain in the lobby during programming, unless they have special permission from a staff person.
12. Parents/guardians must monitor the behavior of siblings at all times while on Saddle Up! property.
13. Any participant who exhibits behavior that is potentially dangerous to themselves or our horses, volunteers, and staff can be dismissed from the activity and/or program.
14. We ask that each family clean up after themselves before leaving for the day. This helps keep our family area nice for everyone to enjoy.
15. Saddle Up! will take appropriate measures up to and including calling the local police department if a staff person suspects that a parent or volunteer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
16. Saddle Up! is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Saddle Up! is committed to ensuring the safety of all program participants and volunteers.
17. All persons on the property outside of the lobby must sign a volunteer waiver or visitor release form.
18. For the safety of all participants, pets are not allowed on the Saddle Up! property, with the exception of service animals.
19. Saddle Up! asks you to please refrain from bringing treats for the horses. Please refer to "Ways to Say Thank You" for suggestions on gifts for the horses.

## PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY/DISCHARGE

### PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- Saddle Up! serves children and youth with a documented disability, such as Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, ADHD, Anxiety, genetic disorders, and much more.
- Depending on the program, Saddle Up! offers services to children and youth with disabilities from the age of 2 years old to 24 years old.
- Saddle Up! also follows the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications for determining eligibility for our programs.
- Participants must have proper head, neck, and trunk control to sit upright on a horse. We can do an assessment in order to determine head, neck, and trunk control if a parent/guardian are unsure if their child qualifies.
- Participants must be under the weight limit of our program horses. The weight limit varies on the carrying capacity of our current horses. Once a participant has reached 175 lbs, we will talk with the parent/guardian regarding their child(ren)'s participation opportunity moving forward.

### PROGRAM DISCHARGE

- In the event that a Saddle Up! participant is no longer a fit, they may be discharged from the program.
- Discharge reasons include but are not limited to...
  - The participant has not been active in a Saddle Up! program for more than 2 years.
  - The participant being over the weight limit of our program horses.
  - The participant having changes in their medical condition(s).
  - The participant exhibiting violence towards people or horses.
  - The participant having increased behavior concerns or changes.
  - The parent/guardian(s) failure to adhere to Saddle Up! policies and procedures.
- Saddle Up! reserves the right to immediately discharge any participant whose actions pose significant harm or danger to other participants, volunteers, staff, animals, other individuals, or Saddle Up! property. The participant's parent/guardian will be immediately notified of the cause for such action.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- All participants must register for Saddle Up! programs each session. When registering for a program you are making a weekly commitment for the FULL session.
  - Saddle Up! offers 3 sessions per year, Spring (January-May), Summer (June-July), and Fall (August-December). The spring and fall sessions are anywhere from 14-18 weeks and the summer is 7-8 weeks, depending on holidays and our events.
  - If you are not able to commit to the full session please talk with a full-time program staff person PRIOR to registering.
- Registration is done online or in person and payment must be made at time of registration (cost varies depending on the program).
- There is a \$25 non-refundable, registration fee due for each program, each session at the time of registration.
- An email will be sent out with registration information prior to the beginning of each session. This email will have the registration link or you can visit our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org/parents/](http://www.saddleupnashville.org/parents/).
- Registrations are accepted on a first come, first serve basis and we strictly adhere to our deadlines.
- Late registration may result in a fee and/or it may prevent your child from participating in the desired program.
- New participants MUST have received a Saddle Up! assessment for their desired program PRIOR to registering for the upcoming session.
- If you get behind on payments, we cannot register your child for the upcoming session until the outstanding balance is paid in full.

## VISITORS

We allow friends and other family members to visit the program.

- Visitors **MUST** remain in the family area, therapy room, or outdoor family courtyard during lessons. If the scheduled activity cannot be observed from the family area or courtyard then visitors will not be able to observe that activity.
- Special permission can be obtained by the instructor for the visitor to observe from the bleachers and this request needs to be made prior to the start of the lesson.
- If visitors want a tour of the facility, they must sign a Visitor Release form and be wearing closed toed shoes. We can only accommodate this request if a staff person or trained volunteer is available to provide the tour. If you know your visitor will want a tour, please contact the office a few days in advance to schedule the tour.

## MEDICAL & NON-MEDICAL LEAVE

### MEDICAL LEAVE

Occasionally, a participant may have a medical condition arise and they are temporarily not eligible to participate in the program. Saddle Up! considers these temporary leaves of absence Medical Leave.

- If your child needs to go on Medical Leave, you **MUST** notify the full-time program staff as soon as possible.
- Depending on the duration of Medical Leave, we may or may not hold the lesson/appointment time for the participant.
- Medical Leave does not affect their spot in the program whether their lesson/appointment time is held or not. Once they receive medical clearance then they will be allowed to return to the program or register for the upcoming session.
- In order to return from Medical Leave, the participant **MUST** have a signed release from their physician/therapist stating that they are allowed to return to equine assisted activities and therapies.
- The release from the physician/therapist must be submitted (in writing) to Saddle Up! full-time program staff prior to the participant returning.

### NON-MEDICAL LEAVE

Occasionally, a participant may choose to temporarily or permanently withdraw from a program due to unforeseen circumstances; such as moving, increased school demands, loss of interest, etc. Saddle Up! considers these types of leave Non-Medical Leave.

- If your child needs to go on Non-Medical Leave, you **MUST** notify the full-time program staff (email preferred) with 2 weeks of notice.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for any program fees during the 2 weeks of notice.
- Participants are allowed to participate within those 2 weeks, if they are available.
- The lesson/appointment time will **NOT** be held for the participant.
- In order to return from Non-Medical Leave, the parent/guardian must contact the full-time program staff and then register for the upcoming session.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER & TEMPERATURE

### INCLEMENT WEATHER GUIDELINES

- Due to our indoor arena and classroom, Saddle Up! is able to operate programs in many different types of weather and throughout the year. Saddle Up! defines inclement weather as weather that affects the safety of conducting programs or traveling to the farm for participants, volunteers, and staff. Inclement weather could include snow, ice, flooding, etc.
- The decision to cancel programs due to inclement weather will be made by the Saddle Up! staff.
- Communications regarding program cancellations are sent out via Facebook, email, text messages, or phone calls prior to the scheduled program time whenever possible.
- Inclement weather is assessed by monitoring weather forecasts and evaluating roads conditions.
- We DO NOT follow the local school system for program cancellation.
- If sudden inclement weather occurs during program activities, the instructor/therapist has ultimate responsibility for participants, volunteers, and horses.
- If you are not sure whether Saddle Up! programs are operating due to inclement weather please contact the Lesson Hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 for more information.

### TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES

The temperature will be based on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for Franklin, TN (zip code 37069) at the time the mounted programs occur. Hot and cold weather is evaluated due to medical conditions of participants, volunteer/staff comfort due to amount of time to be exposed, and horse health.

#### **Heat:**

- If the heat index is above 95 °F, all programs must stay in the indoor arena/barn area and mounted programs will be limited to being walk only. Participants and volunteers/staff will be evaluated for heat tolerance as needed.
- If the heat index is 100 °F or above, mounted programs will not occur and participants will be evaluated for heat tolerance as needed.
  - Adaptive Riding, Interactive Vaulting, Alumni Transitions, and Equestrian Club lessons will take place off the horse in the form of unmounted horsemanship activities.
  - Therapy Services appointments will take place in the therapy room utilizing the MiraColt.
  - Equine Assisted Learning will occur as usual.

#### **Cold:**

- If the actual temperature is below 32 °F degrees, mounted lessons/appointments will not occur and participants will be evaluated for cold tolerance as needed.
  - Adaptive Riding, Interactive Vaulting, Alumni Transitions, and Equestrian Club lessons will take place off the horse in the form of unmounted horsemanship activities, preferably in the classroom or therapy room.
  - Therapy Services appointments will take place in the therapy room utilizing the MiraColt.
  - Equine Assisted Learning will occur as usual.

## CASTING INFORMATION

Casting is a common reason for participants to be on medical leave from Saddle Up!. The two main reasons for casting are serial casting and fractures. Whether or not they are able to participate in Saddle Up! programs are outlined below.

### SERIAL CASTING

- Serial casting is a noninvasive procedure that helps children and adults improve their range of motion so they can perform daily activities with less difficulty. It is a process in which a well-padded cast is used to immobilize a joint that is lacking full range of motion. The cast will be applied and removed on a weekly basis. Each cast gradually increases the range of motion in the affected joint.
- **CAN NOT RIDE**
  - The physician/therapist has NOT approved them to participate in Saddle Up! programs.
  - The cast is on a lower extremity (including the foot) and the participant CAN'T get a boot or shoe to cover their full foot.
  - The cast is causing a discomfort/pain to the participant or horse.
  - The cast is causing difficulty in balancing.
- **CAN RIDE**
  - The cast is on an upper extremity (arm) and their physician/therapist has approved for them to continue participating in Saddle Up! programs.
  - The cast is on a lower extremity (leg), their physician/therapist has approved for them to continue participating in Saddle Up! programs, and they can wear a boot or shoe that covers their full foot. The boot or shoe can be larger than normal size to accommodate a cast if needed.
  - The cast is NOT causing a discomfort/pain to the participant or horse.
  - The cast is NOT causing difficulty in balancing.

### FRACTURES

- In the event of a fracture, participants need to go on Medical Leave and are not allowed to participate in Saddle Up! programs.
- To return to their Saddle Up! program, participants must have their cast removed and a signed release from their physician stating that they are allowed to return to equine assisted activities and therapies.
- The release from the physician must be submitted (in writing) to Saddle Up! prior to the participant returning.

## PARENT & STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

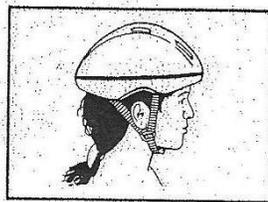
We encourage parents and staff to have a good communication system in order to provide the best experience for our participants.

- Our instructors/therapists are required to contact all parents prior to the start of the session to acquire information that is helpful in interacting with your child(ren).
- This information is shared with our volunteers so they are effective in supporting your child(ren) during programming.
- If your child(ren) has any medication changes or changes in ability please communicate with the instructor/therapist or another Saddle Up! staff person as soon as possible.
- Our instructors/therapists will share their email address to maintain open communication in addition to talking with them in person before and after programming.
- If you need to speak with your child(ren)'s instructor/therapist by phone, please email him/her directly to request a phone call.
- For absences, please email us at [attendance@saddleupnashville.org](mailto:attendance@saddleupnashville.org). If the absence is less than 2 hours' notice from the program time you MUST also CALL the lesson hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 and leave a message.
- For tardies, please call the office at (615) 794-1150 and talk with a staff person or leave a message on the lesson hotline at extension 290.
- Some programs have specific cancellation policies that may result in forfeited lessons and/or fees, so please check your program manual for more information.

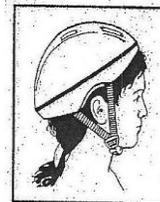
## HELMET INFORMATION

### HELMET FIT GUIDELINES

- The helmet should be level front to rear and side to side; a common mistake is to wear the helmet tipped too far back. To be sure the helmet is properly positioned, look in a mirror with your head slightly turned.
- Adjust the straps so that the helmet remains level. The front and rear strap of the "V" should be snug and positioned just below the earlobe.
- The buckle strap should also be snug under the chin, but not to the point that it causes discomfort or difficulty swallowing. You should feel the strap against your skin, but be able to slide a finger under it. The "rule of thumb" is 2 fingers width.
- To test fit:
  - Lift up or down on the visor to see if eyebrows move up and down OR
  - Shake your head from side to side and front to back; if it fits properly the helmet should stay in place
- It is recommended that the straps are readjusted with each helmet use.
- Saddle Up! instructors/therapists will check for proper helmet fit before your child enters the arena.



**Correct Fit**



**Incorrect Fit**

**HELMET BORROWING GUIDELINES**

Saddle Up! keeps a limited supply of helmets on-site for participants for the following uses:

- **Specific practice helmets** are available upon request for home use ONLY! These helmets are for those who find it difficult to wear a hat/helmet so that they can practice wearing one before coming to Saddle Up!. These helmets are NOT to be used when mounted.
- **Forgot your child's helmet.** Please be respectful of this opportunity and only use it when needed because the participant's helmet was not brought to Saddle Up! that day. All participants are encouraged to have their own helmet for regular use.
- **Disinfecting spray** is used on helmets after each use. If your child may have a reaction to this type of product please do NOT use Saddle Up! helmets.

**HELMET CARE TIPS**

Helmets are worn to protect your child's head. Please handle them with care to ensure they will continue to be an effective form of protection for your child.

- Helmet manufacturers recommend replacement for the following reasons:
  - After 5 years of use by a single person
  - Any time the helmet is dropped or if the participant experiences a fall
- Helmets are not to be stored in a car due to the extreme temperatures that can impact the effectiveness of their protection. It is also not recommended to allow a helmet to roll around in your car.

**HELMET CLEANING TIPS**

- Soak the liner in mild, soapy water.
- Don't use solvents or chemicals to clean any part of the helmet, as they can destroy protective coatings and compromise the structural integrity of the helmet.
- Use compressed air to clear helmet air vents and channels.
- Allow the liner to air dry completely after washing and between uses.
- Methods for cleaning the outside of safety helmets depend on the exterior materials.
- Plastic schooling helmets can be wiped down with a soft towel and some soapy water and air dried. You can restore luster and shine with an application of a light wax protector like Pledge.
- Microfiber helmets, such as the newer Euro-styled helmets, can actually withstand the same mild soap and water treatment. Make sure you also rinse them well with clean water to remove all soapy residue. Again, air-dry the helmet in the shade.
- For leather-covered helmets use a dark damp cloth. If needed use leather cleaning products used for saddles and boots.

**LOCAL & ONLINE TACK STORES****Local Tack Stores:**

Franklin Horse Supply*	Tractor Supply	French's Boot Outlet	Dover Saddlery*
1561 Columbia Ave.	Hillsboro Road 328	5th Ave North.	1114 Hillsboro Road
Franklin, TN 37064	Franklin, TN 37064	Franklin, TN 37064	Franklin, TN 37064
615-790-7860	(615)791-0791	(615)599-6965	(615) 591-6414

*\*Mention Saddle Up! and discounts will be offered on some riding attire, such as helmets and boots.*

**Online Tack Stores:**

[www.statelinetack.com](http://www.statelinetack.com)  
[www.doversaddlery.com](http://www.doversaddlery.com)

[www.sstack.com](http://www.sstack.com)  
[www.freedomrider.com](http://www.freedomrider.com)

[www.smartpak.com](http://www.smartpak.com)

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- I. **GENERAL PRINCIPLE:** Saddle Up! shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program. Participants, their families, and our volunteers have a right to privacy that gives them control over the dissemination of their personal, medical or other sensitive information.
- II. **INFORMATION COVERED BY THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:** The staff shall keep confidential all medical, social, referral, personal and financial information regarding a person and his/her family. This includes mailing lists for the organization.
- III. **PERSONS SUBJECT TO THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:** Anyone who works or volunteers for, or provides services to Saddle Up! is bound by this policy. This includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Full and part-time staff
  - b. Independent contractors
  - c. Temporary employees
  - d. Volunteers
  - e. Board members
- IV. **COMPETENCY AND INFORMED CONSENT DISCLOSURE:** A participant may not be competent to give consent for disclosure of medical or sensitive information or both (including photographs and videotapes) because of age or mental incapacity. Only parent(s), legal representatives or others defined by state statute have this authority.
- V. **INTRA-AGENCY ACCESS TO AND DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL AND/OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION:** No access to, or disclosure of medical and/or sensitive information will be made without a participant's consent based on a perceived need to protect staff or anyone else from possible exposure through casual contact. Universal precautions will be used with all participants under the assumption that all participants may have been exposed to infectious disease.
- VI. **EXTRA-AGENCY DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL AND/OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION:** Disclosure of information to outside agencies or individuals will be made only with specific written consent of the participant or guardian.
- VII. **WRITTEN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:** Each volunteer and staff member for Saddle Up! has signed a written statement acknowledging this policy.

## BEHAVIOR POLICY

Saddle Up! defines disruptive behavior as any behavior that interferes with the staff's ability to conduct the program or the ability of other participants to benefit from the program, or that poses significant danger to the participant, others or animals. Such behavior may take various forms and can be dependent on many factors including class size, program activities, and the relationship between the staff and participants.

Disruptive behavior may be viewed on a continuum ranging from isolated incidents of mildly annoying or irritating behavior to more clearly disruptive, dangerous, and/or violent behavior. It is at the reasonable discretion of the Saddle Up! Staff to determine the severity of a specific behavior.

Disruptive Behaviors include but are not limited to the following...

- Persistently speaking without permission.
- Disputing authority and/or arguing with a staff person or volunteer.
- Insulting language or gestures towards staff, volunteers, participants, horses, etc.
- Showing disrespect or displaying poor manners towards staff, volunteers, participants, horses, others or Saddle Up! property.
- Carrying a sharp object, weapon, or device not related to the program.
- Verbal, psychological, or physical threats and/or harassment towards staff, volunteers, participants, horses, etc.
- Physical violence towards staff, volunteers, participants, horses, etc.

Guidelines to address disruptive behavior include but are not limited to the following:

1. When confronted with disruptive, but non-threatening behavior, the staff should issue a general word of caution to the group as a whole rather than a single participant (if applicable).
2. If the general word of caution does not stop the disruptive behavior the staff should discuss the issue with the participant directly (parent/guardian to be included on the discussion if necessary). The discussion should include a description of the problem, the reason it is disruptive, and the consequences of continued violations.
3. If the disruptive behavior prevents further participation, then the staff is allowed to remove the participant from the program and return him/her to his/her parent/guardian.
4. If threats have been made or physical violence is imminent the staff is allowed to remove the participant from the program immediately and return him/her to his/her parent/guardian.
5. Continuous disruptive behavior will be addressed in the following manner...
  - a. The staff will meet with the participant, his/her parent/guardian, and the Program Manager and/or Executive Director. The meeting will include a discussion on the behavior and consequences of future violations. This will be conducted via phone if necessary and will be documented in the participant's Saddle Up! record.
  - b. The participant will give a formal written apology to necessary parties, i.e. other participants, volunteers, staff, etc.
  - c. The participant, participant's parent/guardian, and designated Saddle Up! representative (Program Manager and/or Executive Director) will sign an agreement that details the participant's commitment to corrective action and desired behavior.
6. Continuous threats, harassment, and/or physical violence will be addressed in the following manner:
  - a. After the first occurrence, the staff will discuss the violation with a parent/guardian to help avoid any future violation.
  - b. If the behavior occurs a second time, the participant can be dismissed from the program.
7. Saddle Up! reserves the right to immediately remove and/or suspend any participant whose actions pose significant harm or danger to other participants, volunteers, staff, animals, other individuals, or Saddle Up! property. The participant's parent/guardian will be immediately notified of the cause for such action.

## PHOTOS/VIDEOS & SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

### PHOTOS & VIDEOS

- NO flash photography.
- You must have permissions from the Instructor/Therapist prior to taking photos/video of programs.
- Do not lean through the arena railing or fencing for a photo/video.
- Do not enter the arena or pasture for a photo/video.
- Do not photograph or video another person's child.
- If you realize you have a photo or video with another person's child in it, please delete it.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

- We ask that you keep social media posts about Saddle Up! positive and encouraging.
- Do not post photos or videos that include other people's children.
- Do not post photos or videos with identifying information about volunteers.
- Do not tag Saddle Up! in a social media post without permission from our marketing department.
- Always comply with copyright and fair use laws when publishing something on a social media platform.

## WAYS TO SAY "THANK YOU!"

### TO THE HORSES

- Letters or cards to place on the horse's stall or in the family area.
- Gift cards to Tractor Supply, Franklin Horse Supply, Walmart, PetSmart, etc.
- Grooming brushes
- Horse shampoo and conditioners
- Riding tack (see Equine Manager for what is specifically needed)
- Items from our Wish List (visit our website for this list).

### TO THE DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

The volunteers that help out with your child do not expect gifts in return – the smile on the children's faces and "thank you" are reward enough for them. For those specific occasions when parents would like to show their appreciation to the volunteers on their child's riding team – or all the volunteers in general, here are some helpful ideas:

- Snack and goodies
- Bottled water
- Letter or card
- Small craft made by your child(ren)
- Pictures of your child(ren)

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY PROCESS

- Inform a staff person immediately of any type of emergency and follow their instructions.
- A staff person trained in CPR/First Aid will evaluate the person, provide care as needed, and determine whether emergency services are needed.
- If the injured party has fallen from some type of height (i.e. horse), have them remain on the ground and still until evaluated by a staff person trained in CPR/First Aid.
- Secure all horses in the area/arena by ensuring they are on-lead and move them away from the injured party.
- If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
  - Volunteers remain with their assigned participant or horse, unless told differently.
  - The Instructor/Therapist will decide whether to dismiss or resume the program/activity.
  - Parents and guardians should not approach the scene until asked to by the Instructor/Therapist.
- Any additional people or participants (not needed for medical support) in the area/arena should be diverted to another location to give the injured party privacy.

### EMERGENCY DISMOUNT PROCESS

If there is an emergency that arises while a horse is being ridden, it may be necessary to get the participant off quickly. If there is not enough time to stop and do the participant's usual dismount then an Emergency Dismount will be necessary. Here are the steps for an Emergency Dismount.

- Sidewalkers/Supporters
  - a. Ensure the participant's feet are clear of the stirrups.
  - b. Wrap your arms around their waist.
  - c. Pull them to your hip.
  - d. Slowly back away from the horse (avoid putting you and the participant directly behind the horse).
- Leaders/Handlers
  - a. Ensure the horse is on-lead.
  - b. Walk the horse away from the participant (avoid putting the participant directly behind the horse).

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- Telephones are located in the main office and inside the barn office. Vet and other important numbers are posted by the phone with directions to the facility.
- Four fire extinguishers are located in the indoor arena, one at each corner. Two extinguishers are located in the main barn next to the North and South roll-up doors.
- Human first aid supplies are located in the cabinets behind the lobby desk and in the designated locker in the barn.
- Horse first aid supplies are found in the main barn vet area.
- Completed Emergency Medical Treatment Release forms for both volunteers and participants are in folders in the file cabinet room.
- All Saddle Up! Instructors and Therapists are CPR/AED, First Aid, and Concussion trained.

**ALL EMERGENCIES OR INJURIES TO PEOPLE OR HORSES MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN AN OCCURRENCE REPORT AND SUBMITTED TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR. A STAFF PERSON FILLS OUT THE REPORT AND WILL NEED INPUT FROM ALL WHO WITNESSED THE EVENT.**

## DISASTER PLANS

### FIRE

- Inform a staff person immediately and call 911 or pull a fire alarm pull station to notify the Fire Department.
- If the fire is small, locate a fire extinguisher and/or water hose and use it to extinguish the fire. If that does not work please evacuate the facility.
- Evacuate the facility at the closest exit to you that is not near the fire.
- Before evacuating, staff and volunteers in the barn need to release horses to the closest pasture, if time allows.
- Once evacuated, everyone needs to go to the grassy area at the back of the parking lot that is located between the parking lot and sensory field. This is a safe zone where staff will do a headcount to ensure everyone is accounted for.
- Do not leave the property until told to do so.
- If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
  - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately, evacuate the facility with the participant, and go to the safe zone.
  - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, evacuate the facility, remove all equipment from the horse, release them to the closest pasture, and go to the safe zone.
  - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming. We will reunite you with your child in the safe zone.

### TORNADO

- If we are under a tornado watch, staff will monitor the weather forecast and the weather outside to determine if programs can operate. If programs continue operation they must remain in the indoor arena.
- If we are under a tornado warning all programs must immediately cease and the procedure below is in effect.
  - Take cover in the closest Severe Weather Shelter Area (indicated with a green sign with a tornado on it).
  - If time allows, staff and volunteers in the barn need to release horses to the closest pasture.
  - Do not leave your cover area until told to do so by a staff person.
  - If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
    - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately, get the participants to their family (if time allows), and take cover.
    - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, remove all equipment from the horse, release them to the closest pasture, and take cover.
    - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming, we will reunite you with your child before you take cover, if time allows.

### SEVERE THUNDERSTORM/HEAVY LIGHTENING

- Depending on the severity of the storm, Saddle Up! staff will determine whether programs will be able to operate. Many times if the horses and participants are not bothered by the storm we are able to operate.
- If programs are not able to operate an indoor/unmounted program will be available, if appropriate, and the procedure below is in effect.
  - Everyone should remain in the facility until the lightening has ceased.
  - Staff and volunteers in the barn can choose to get horses to cover if it is safe and time allows.
  - If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
    - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately and escort them into the front lobby.
    - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, remove all equipment from the horse, put them in a stall, and remain in the facility.
    - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming, we will get them to you
    - Instructor/Therapist will decide if an indoor/unmounted program will be available and appropriate.

## FLOOD

- Depending on the severity of the flooding, Saddle Up! staff will determine whether programs will be able to operate. Due to the Harpeth River backing up to our property, we have minor flooding in our back fields that does not affect program operations.
- There are local roads that have been known to flood that can affect participants, volunteers, and staff from safely traveling to the farm. If multiple roads are affected by flooding and it is not safe for people to travel to Saddle Up! then programs will be cancelled.
- If programs are in progress during a Flood Warning, staff will monitor local road conditions and determine whether programs will be able to continue.
- Since people travel from many different locations to Saddle Up!, we ask that you follow general safety guidelines for flooding (listed below from [www.ready.gov/floods.com](http://www.ready.gov/floods.com)).
  - Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters. Turn Around, Don't Drown!
    - Six inches of moving water can knock you down.
    - One foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
  - Stay off of bridges over fast-moving water.
  - Determine how best to protect yourself based on the type of flooding.
    - Evacuate if told to do so.
    - Move to higher ground or a higher floor.
    - Stay where you are.

## ACTIVE SHOOTER

- Call 911 immediately and inform a staff person, if possible.
- In the event of an active shooter, there are three recommended actions provided by the Department of Homeland Security: FEMA, and in order, they are...
  - Run – Evacuate the facility at the closest exit to you that is not near the shooter and find somewhere to take cover. Help others evacuate, if possible.
  - Hide – Take cover in an enclosed room and lock it behind you or barricade the door, if possible. Help others hide, if possible.
  - Fight – As a last resort and if your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter.
- Once law enforcement arrive on the scene their immediate purpose is to stop the active shooter. Please remain calm and follow their instructions as they assess the scene.
- Law enforcement will need everyone to stay on site until all questioning has been completed and they have determined that it is safe to leave.
- If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
  - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately and follow the best course of action based on the recommended actions above for you and the participant to get to safety.
  - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, follow the best course of action based on the recommended actions above to get to safety. If possible, remove all equipment from the horse and release them to the closest pasture.
  - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming, we will reunite you with your child as soon as possible.

## VOLUNTEERS

As a non-profit, Saddle Up! relies heavily on volunteers to operate our facility and programs. Below is information about our volunteers for our families and participants.

- All program volunteers are required to attend a New Volunteer Training and go through a background screening.
- Volunteers receive additional training based on their responsibilities at Saddle Up!.
- We ask that you join us in celebrating National Volunteer Appreciation Week that occurs in April each year.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

As a non-profit, Saddle Up! relies heavily on people giving of their time, money, and talents. If you have the ability to provide additional support to our organization there is more information below on how you can do that.

### DONATE

Your monetary gift will help children experience the physical, emotional, and mental benefits of this special program. Saddle Up! keeps fees low due to the support of generous donors that help fill the gap between program fees and actual costs. If you would like to help support our programs, please visit our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org).

### VOLUNTEER IN PROGRAMS

Saddle Up! depends on volunteers to make our program possible. We offer a variety of volunteer opportunities from assisting in lessons to caring for our wonderful horses. No horse experience is needed as we provide training for all volunteer roles. If you are interested in volunteering, you can contact our Volunteer Services Director at (615) 794-1150 x230 to sign up for a New Volunteer Training.

### VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILL/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (IN KIND)

Many of our parents/guardians have skills or offer professional services that we aren't aware of. This could include many different career areas such as electricians, landscapers, musicians, technology, marketing, fundraising, public speaking, finance, carpenters, etc. If you have a skill or if your company or business would be willing to donate a professional service that Saddle Up! could benefit from, please let a staff person know.

### VOLUNTEER WITH A GROUP

Certain times of the year, Saddle Up! has special projects that need to be completed by large groups. We have many businesses come out for teambuilding and group volunteer projects throughout the year. If you know of a business or group that is interested in volunteering as a group, you can contact our Volunteer Services Director at (615) 794-1150 x230. We will provide on-site training specific to their project.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Saddle Up! holds several special events a year where you can come and enjoy a day or evening of activities, knowing your money is going to a good organization. You can visit our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org) to see our upcoming events.

## TERMINOLOGY

It is essential that accurate terminology/wording be used when describing activities that incorporate horses in order to promote clarity, consistency, and transparency in settings, including marketing, research, and clinical documentation, resulting in improved quality of communication, better consumer protection and expanded professionalism. We have defined some helpful terms below for our families to have a better understanding of the services we provide.

**Adaptive Riding:** Horseback riding lessons for individuals with special needs. Taught by experienced instructors who have received specialized training and are often certified to work with students with disabilities. These instructors adapt their teaching style, the environment and/or equipment to facilitate acquisition of riding skills and participation in an enjoyable activity. Opportunities are available to participate in competitive equestrian events, recreation and leisure, education, socialization, and/or fitness. 'Adaptive Riding' is synonymous with 'Therapeutic Riding'. It is recommended that individuals use the term 'Adaptive Riding' to replace 'Therapeutic Riding' because it is more accurate and is consistent with other activities and sports for individuals with disabilities. 'Therapeutic Riding' is often confused with 'Therapy', whereas 'Adaptive Riding' is easier to distinguish.

**Equine Assisted Therapies (EAT):** An umbrella term used to describe a group of therapies provided by licensed healthcare professionals who include horses and/or equine interactions as a treatment tool/strategy. When referring to therapy including horses, it is advised that therapists specify the professional license that they are working under (i.e. physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, or mental health/psychotherapy) and utilize a term that leads with the professional service being provided. Therapy utilizing the movement of the horse was previously referred to as hippotherapy. Hippotherapy is not a profession nor a separate service. There are no "hippotherapists" nor "equine therapists". If your child(ren) is part of Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services program, you can describe what they participate in by stating they are receiving Physical, Occupational, or Speech therapy services that incorporate the use and manipulation of equine movement as part of the overall treatment plan.

**Mounted Horsemanship:** This term is used to describe activities that are performed when riding on the back of a horse. In mounted horsemanship the participant uses their natural (hand, seat, and leg) and artificial aids (if needed), to influence the movement of the horse. Mounted horsemanship activities include, but are not limited to, upward transitions, downward transitions, use of rein aids, use of leg aids, 2-point position, posting trot, sitting trot, diagonals, mounting, dismounting, and canter leads.

**Unmounted Horsemanship:** This term is used to describe activities that focus on learning more about the horse and their environment from the ground. In unmounted horsemanship the participant does not ride the horse, but can interact with the horse in hand (being led) as well as participate in activities without a horse. Unmounted horsemanship activities include, but are not limited to, horse breeds, horse body language, farm/barn responsibilities, horse health care, grooming, and tacking.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What do I do if I have to cancel my child's activity?** If your child is going to be absent, please email us at [attendance@saddleupnashville.org](mailto:attendance@saddleupnashville.org). If the absence is less than 2 hours' notice from the program time you MUST also CALL the lesson hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 and leave a message. If you are running late and your child will be tardy, please call the office at (615) 794-1150 and talk with a staff person or leave a message on the lesson hotline at extension 290. We ask that you notify Saddle Up! of cancellations as soon as possible. Some programs have specific cancellation policies that may result in forfeited lessons and/or fees, so please check your program manual for more information.

**Can I go in the barn?** We ask all families to remain in the lobby/family area during programs for the safety of the participants and horses and to prevent distractions. If an out of town family member comes to lessons you may ask program staff to tour them through the facility if they have time. They would need to complete a Visitor Release Form prior to being toured by a staff person and they must be wearing closed-toe shoes for their safety. During horse shows and open houses families will be invited to view their children from close up and will be allowed to take photos (NO flash photography allowed).

**Can I bring other children to the farm?** Yes, the whole family is welcome. If you bring other children, it is your responsibility to supervise them at all times. Only Saddle Up! participants and team members will be allowed in the programming areas. Do not allow children to climb/walk on fences, swing on the gates, or pet the horses.

**What do we do when we arrive for a lesson?** Bring your child into the family area and wait for their instructor/therapist to come and get them for the lesson. The instructor/therapist will come to you, fit the helmet on the participant, and then proceed to the programming area. This is a great time to update the instructor/therapist on how your child's day has gone and if there has been any changes we need to be aware of.

**Who will have access to my child's file and information?** Only staff and authorized volunteers, such as interns for educational purposes, will have access to participant files. Volunteers are given information about your child that allows them to provide the support needed during programs. Volunteers and staff sign a confidentiality statement and our training emphasizes the need for confidentiality. A copy of our confidentiality policy is provided in this handbook.

**How do I find out if Saddle Up! has been cancelled due to weather?** Communications regarding program cancellations are sent out via Facebook, email, text messages, or phone calls prior to the scheduled program time whenever possible. **We DO NOT follow the local school system for program cancellation.** If you are not sure whether Saddle Up! programs are operating due to inclement weather please contact the Lesson Hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 for more information.

**What about make-up lessons?** Due to the complexity of our program schedule, we do NOT offer make ups for any of our programs.

**Can I volunteer?** Absolutely! If you are interested in volunteering you can contact our Volunteer Services Director at (615) 794-1150 x230 to sign up for a New Volunteer Training.